



Guidelines for softwood establishment in WA



A commercial pine plantation is a long-term investment that requires 30 years to provide the maximum economic return to a landowner.

The first opportunity to receive a return from the plantation comes during initial thinning operations around 12 to 15 years after the plantation is established.

The decisions made when planning and establishing a plantation are critical to achieving long-term returns.

This introductory guide has been developed to help landowners understand some of the key decisions and considerations when establishing a softwood plantation

Pine species

Western Australia's softwood industry is based on two pine species



Maritime pine

Maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) is suited to the intermediate rainfall areas greater than 600 mm and deeper sandy soils that appear on the Swan coastal plain and in the central Wheatbelt. The timber is primarily used by industry for engineered laminated veneer lumber (LVL) and for engineered wood products within the building industry.



Radiata pine

Radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*) is generally suited to the rainfall areas greater than 650 mm and deeper loamy gravels in the South West and Great Southern regions of WA. The timber supports significant processing businesses primarily producing structural wood and particle board for Australian markets.

Getting started

While radiata and maritime pine have different site requirements, basic planning considerations are very similar



Rainfall

Is there enough rainfall in the area to support a 30 year rotation?



Soil

Do you have the right soil profile?



Site selection

Are there previous land use factors that could impact plantation success?



Neighbours

Would a plantation impact or compliment neighbouring land uses?



Water

Is there access to water to fight fire?



Location

Is the site within an economic haulage distance from processing facilities?



Size

Does the site provide sufficient scale to be viable?





Costs

Establishment costs will vary on a number of factors

- previous land use
- site preparation costs
- planting and seedlings costs
- landowners capacity to undertake site preparations
- pest and weed control
- fencing requirements

Private forestry consultants or tree grower groups can provide advice on costs and give assistance to plan and establish plantations.

The first step

Once the decision has been made to invest in a pine plantation a series of approvals and regulatory requirements must be met

- Plantations will need to align with local government designated land uses for the area.
- Plantations larger than 10 ha require a Plantation Management Plan that details species and rotation length, and maps that show area size, layout and access.
- Plantations require a Fire Management Plan that complies with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and industry guidelines for fire protection.



Advisory Service

The Forest Products Commission has extensive experience in managing softwood plantations in Western Australia and now has an advisory service that can provide general advice to landowners to establish and grow their own softwood plantation.

Call 1800 241 688 or visit our website www.fpc.wa.gov.au/softwood-strategy



Plantation establishment and ongoing considerations

Effective site preparation and structured maintenance are the key to establishing a healthy and productive plantation

- Seedlings should be established early-mid winter to maximise survival in their first year.
- Plantings generally need to be larger than 5 ha to be commercially viable.
- Site and soil preparation is essential to establish a healthy plantation.
- Soils must be well drained with profiles deeper than 2.5 m.
- Effective weed control is critical to the survival of young seedlings.
- Pest control is essential and seedlings must be monitored for pests in the first 18 months.
- Stock must be excluded from plantings for up to four years, and until trees are taller than 3 m.

Further information

If you have any further queries regarding softwood establishment in WA please contact us:

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